



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 20, 2020

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San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors Receive COVID-19 Updates and Take Actions
San Joaquin County Poised for COVID-19 Vaccine Storage and Distribution

STOCKTON – As four COVID-19 vaccines enter late stage clinical trials in the United States for adults 18 and older, San Joaquin County public health officials told the Board of Supervisors today that they have taken proactive steps to prepare for proper and effective storage and disbursement of a vaccine at the local level.

Two of these COVID-19 vaccine formulations require ultra-low temperature storage at approximately 94 degrees below zero. To ensure the County is ready and equipped to receive, store and distribute adequate quantities of either of those vaccines, officials have obtained two ultra-low temperature freezers that meet the cold storage requirements.

“The County is prepared to administer vaccines as soon as they are deemed safe and are available,” said Kathy Miller, Chair of the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors. “We are already engaged in planning efforts with state and local distribution partners such as the Office of Education, community clinics, and non-traditional occupational health facilities and have agreements in place for mass vaccinations.”

When vaccines are available, the County expects to follow the regulations and guidance from the State in terms of the criteria for priority distribution to first responders, health care workers, and individuals most susceptible.

The Board of Supervisors also received updates today on the state of the COVID-19 pandemic in San Joaquin County. Greg Diederich, San Joaquin County Health Care Services Agency Director, reported that as of October 19, the County had 21,196 confirmed COVID-19 cases and a total of 484 deaths to date. This past week the County experienced a significant decline in the new COVID-19 cases per day per 100,000 metric as posted by the State today dropping from 6.1 to 4.9.

In addition, current hospitalization numbers remain fairly low. As of yesterday, there were 23 COVID-19 positive patients hospitalized and only five cases are currently being treated in the ICU. Only 4% of all hospitalizations in the County are due to COVID and just 7% of patients in ICU have COVID-19. In the last week, the County saw a slight uptick in daily cases from 77 to 79 per day over a seven-day average and has also significantly increased the number of COVID-19 tests performed daily.

“We have experienced far fewer deaths from COVID-19 in recent weeks and are nowhere near the high of 50-plus deaths per week that we experienced in late July,” Diederich told the Board.

Diederich explained that under the State's tiered system, which is based on a County's rate of new cases and the testing positivity rate that San Joaquin County expects to remain in the red tier for several more weeks. While the County remains in the red tier, it has seen a significant drop in its testing positivity average, dropping to 3.3% from 4.1% from last week. Both of the County's testing positivity metrics are now in the orange tier ranges, while total case rates remain in the red tier. The County needs all three metrics to be in the lower orange tier for two consecutive weeks in order to pass to the next less restrictive tier.

COVID-19 Testing Update:

The County continues to expand testing capability. The PerkinElmer testing facility in Valencia is on track to open on November 2nd with initial testing capacity of 40,000 per day, increasing to a potential of 150,000 tests per day by spring. By December, the San Joaquin Public Health Lab will acquire and have certified a high throughput PCR device, increasing the lab's daily surge capacity for COVID-19 testing to approximately 1,400 tests per day.

The San Joaquin County Office of Emergency services is also working in partnership with a third-party vendor called HR Support and other municipal and business partners to determine new pop-up testing site locations. Many sites are already up and running, which are able to administer hundreds of additional tests daily.

COVID-19 Consent Items:

The Board also approved the following consent items related to COVID-19:

- Approved reimbursement to Health Plan of San Joaquin for purchase of masks to support COVID-19 prevention related to school reopening not to exceed \$428,440.
- Retroactive approval of grant funding agreement with the Center for Tech and Civic Life (CTCL) in the amount of \$584,948, for COVID-19-related election expenditures incurred from June 15, 2020 through December 31, 2020.
- Approved budget adjustments of \$708,021 for CARES Act reimbursable expenses including purchase of custody transportation bus for \$666,000.

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